

## Message Text

SECRET

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2091

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BEIRUT 5432

E. O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR,

SUBJECT: LEBANESE POLITICAL SITUATION

1. I CALLED ON SECRETARY GENERAL OF MINISTRY OF FROEIGN AFFAIRS, NAJIB SADAQA, MAY 11 TO DISCUSS CURRENT SITUATION. AFTER EXPRESSING SOME RELIEF THAT LEBANON HAD ENJOYED TWO DAYS OF RELATIVE CALM, HE OUTLINED THE PRESENT STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR A MODUS VIVENDI BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE FEDAYEEN.

2. NEGOTIATIONS HAVE NOT AS YET BEGUN. THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN ESTABLISHING A POSITION. A PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO COME UP  
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WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CONSIDERATION. THE COMMITTEE, ACCORDING TO HIM, REPRESENTS A CROSS SECTION OF PARLIAMENT, ALTHOUGH BECAUSE OF THE EMERGENCY QUESTIONABLE WHETHER IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS ENDORSED BY PARLIAMENT PER SE. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT OSTENSIBLY INVOLVED, IT HAD BEEN ABLE TO MAKE ITS VIEWS KNOWN TO PARLIAMENTARY GROUP. IN FACT, IT HAD GIVEN MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION A COPY OF A SYRIAN DECREE OF MAY 4, 1969, ISSUED BY HAFEZ ASSAD (WHO AS THE THEN SYRIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE) WHICH REGULATED THE ACTIVITIES OF THE FEDAYEEN IN SYRIA. THE REGULATIONS WERE EXTREMELY STRICT. IN THIS REGARD, HE NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD TRIED TO IMPRESS UPON THE MANY ARAB EMISSARIES WHO CAME HERE THAT LEBANON WAS ASKING NO MORE OF THE FEDAYEEN THAN WAS BEING ASKED OF THEM BY OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES, SUCH AS SYRIA AND EGYPT. HE INDICATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S NEGOTIATING POSITION WOULD BE TOUGH. THE GOVERNMENT REALIZED AT THE SAME TIME HOWEVER THAT IN THE PRESENT SITUATION THEY WOULD HAVE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. HE DID NOT KNOW WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO START NEGOTIATIONS.

4. SADAGA EXPLAINED THAT ONE OF THE LIMITATIONS ON THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION VIS- A- VIS THE FEDAYEEN WAS, OF COURSE, THE VIEWS OF THE MOSLEM COMMUNITY. THE GOVERNMENT OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT AFFORD TO SPLIT THE COUNTRY IN TWO. SO FAR, THE MOSLEMS' POSTURE TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN RELATIVELY SATISFACTORY. THERE WERE, OF COURSE, MOSLEM ARMY PERSONNEL KILLED IN THE FIGHTING AND MOSLEM PROPERTY DAMAGED WHICH, OF COURSE, TEMPERED THEIR SYMPATHY FOR THE FEDAYEEN. HOWEVER, SADAQA, WHO PERSONALLY TAKES A STRONG POSITION AGAINST FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY, REALIZED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD RUN A RISK WITH THE MOSLEM COMMUNITY IF THE ARMY TOOK FURTHER HARSH RETALIATORY ACTION AGAINST THE FEDAYEEN OR WERE INTRANSIGENT IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WITH THEM. THE QUESTION OF CONFEDIONALISM WAS OBVIOUSLY A MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN TO SADAQA AS IT OF COURSE IS TO MANY OTHER LEBANESE, AND MUCH EFFORT HAD BEEN MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHERS TO CONSOLIDATE THE TWO COMMUNITIES IN THEIR SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION RE THE FEDAYEEN.

5. HE WENT OVER FAMILIAR GROUND RE SYRIA AND WAS PLEASED  
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THAT WE WERE MAKING A DEMARCHE TO THE SOVIETS. ACCORDING TO HIM, THE FRENCH WERE CONSIDERING SUCH ACTION BUT HAD NOT DONE SO.

6. AS FAR AS ARAFAT'S CONTINUED COOPERATION, SADAQA WAS HOPEFUL BUT NOT NECESSARILY CONFIDENT.  
HOUGHTON

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NMAFVVZCZ

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